Volume 23, No. 03 • December 11, 2015

Nation

Happy Holidays

Hometown dream
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Controversy rages over *of the North* film

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The Holiday Season is a wonderful time to rejoice. We wish to extend to you our best wishes at this tradition-filled time of the year. May this festive season be filled with joy and pleasant times with your family and loved ones.

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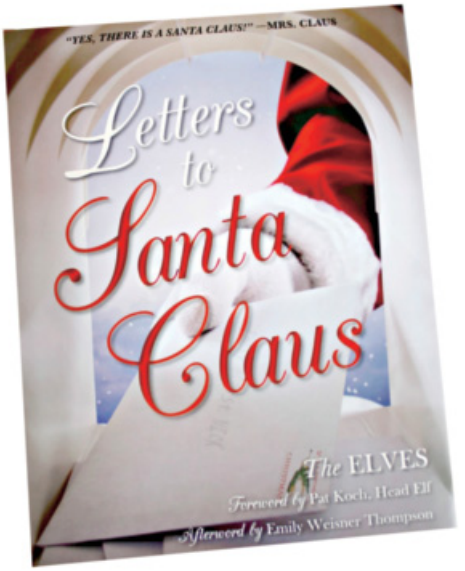
Sharing, caring and you

by Will Nicholls


"YES, THERE IS A SANTA CLAUS!" —MRS. CLAUS
Letters to Santa Claus
The ELVES
Foreword by Pat Koch, Head Elf
Afterword by Emily Weisner Thompson

Every Christmas, I encourage people to open their hearts and wallets for those less fortunate.

According to a Facebook post, Oujé-Bougoumou Chief Curtis Bosum thinks much the same way.

"Some thoughts as we enter the holiday season," Bosum wrote. "It is important to remember that not everyone is surrounded by large wonderful families. Some of us have problems during the holidays and sometimes are overcome with great sadness when we remember the loved ones who are not with us. And, many people have no one to spend these times with and are besieged by loneliness. We all need caring, loving thoughts right now."

That's one way to open our hearts. We think of this as the holiday season but others know it as the suicide season. Surrounded by the joy of others it can be hard on those who do not have anyone to share that joy with. Just as bad is when you cannot afford to have a joyous time.

Some books have come out recently that show this is not a new problem. For example, *Dear Santa: Children's Christmas Letters and Wish Lists, 1870-1920* (Chronicle Books; $14.95) has gift requests that were published in newspapers around the world.

The letters sadly state, "Mama says that Santa Claus does not come to poor people" and "I am afraid you may forget me, like last year." Another book containing letters from the 1930s includes confided secrets: "Mama cries at night when she thinks we are asleep, because she has no money." That's in *Letters to Santa Claus* (Indiana University Press; $16).

Let us all try to make this a thing of the past in our communities. Some of you may have been the recipients of food baskets, Christmas gifts and such in the past. You can understand this better than most. You may have one of the new jobs in mining or other businesses that have opened up lately. Or you may have never had a problem making ends meet.

I'm asking all of you to contribute to your local organizations, such as the Wreath of Hope in Mistissini. Money, food and gifts are given out to those who can use a helping hand. Any extra money is used throughout the year to ensure no one has to cry themselves to sleep because they have no money or hope. Let's give the greatest gifts of all – hope, comfort and joy.

Merry Christmas to one and all from everyone here at *the Nation*.

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Time for reflection

by Joshua Iserhoff

The other day my friend Tina and I chatted how a year can make a big difference, how life takes us from one place to another.

Yes, we're a year older, wiser or, for some, wilder. We've changed or tried not to change. The choice is ours; that's the beauty of it all. Life can be unfair, difficult and sad but all the while hope remains.

I don't know what drives you but one thing that brings enlightenment to most of us is the Christmas season. Many ask themselves where is the Christmas spirit? We can lay down the many reasons why it sometimes seems to be lacking, but you and I know where it is.

Any circumstance during the year could have made this moment less jolly. Not you, Kevin Jolly! You're always Jolly my friend. However, when we see the snow, the Christmas lights, children's laughter, or hear the JBCC's and CBC's Christmas greeting call-ins, usually that softens the Grinch or Krampus heart.

My heart beams with joy when I hear Kenny Rogers and Dolly Parton's Once Upon a Christmas. This album has permanently stamped my heart with blissful childhood memories. I can close my eyes and clearly remember our blue walls inside our log home in Mistissini and our Charlie Brown Christmas tree beautifully accentuating the corner space with bright colourful lights. I can especially see our red cardinal birds adorning the tree and hear Kenny and Dolly singing in the background. Since I was a kid, I was hooked on Dolly. I think the album cover had to do a lot with my fixation. I couldn't get over her red Lee's press-on nails! We all have our Christmas triggers and I hope that you'll find yours soon.

By the time this gets out, I will have celebrated my 38th birthday! Man, what a life. When I started being more appreciative of everything, especially the tough times, that's when life got sweeter. Just the other day, I was honoured to hear a woman I love, Carol Arnott, share her thoughts on love and how love penetrates even the darkest times, even during the attacks in Paris a few weeks ago.

Love covered "les Parisiens" and love prevailed. Love is always ready for a relationship with the world, with you. I opened my life to be loved a year ago and five months later I was blessed with someone to love. Now I'm engaged! Ain't love grand? I'll be 38 and married. I think it's a good number to get hitched. Christmas will be sweeter this year! I remind myself of this quote from Pastor John Bootsma: "Your future is better than your past!" Happy Birthday to you and me!

I want to take this time to wish you all a Merry Christmas. I wish you love. I pray that your hearts will be filled with peace even as you remember your loved ones who've gone home. May forgiveness rule your hearts and joy reign within you as you enter the New Year. My friends, have a fantastic Christmas holiday and a great 2016.

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PRODUCTION AND
SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR
Joshua Grant

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
J. Barde, J. Staniforth, J. Grant,
M. Pash, A. German, J. Iserhoff, X. Kataquapit,

PHOTOGRAPHY
L. Stewart, A. German, N. Diamond,
R. Mayer, W. Nicholls, D. Valade

SALES REPRESENTATIVES
Danielle Valade, Lyle Brebner

DESIGN AND LAYOUT
R. Lawson

THANKS TO: Air Creebec

WHERE TO REACH US:
POSTMASTER:
The Nation PRODUCTION OFFICE
4529 CLARK, #403, MONTREAL, QC., H2T 2T3
EDITORIAL & ADS
TEL.: 514-272-3077, FAX: 514-278-9914
The Nation HEAD OFFICE
P.O. BOX 151, CHISASIBI, QC. J0M 1E0
www.nationnews.ca
E-MAIL ADDRESSES:
Editorial: nation@nationnews.ca
news@nationnews.ca
Ads: for Danielle Valade
ads@nationnews.ca
for Lyle Brebner
publicity@nationnews.ca

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Anti-poverty projects take shape

Provincial funding begins to flow following the Val-d'Or police crisis

by Jesse Staniforth

Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard is quickly making good on his promise to fund projects in Val-d'Or in the wake of the crisis sparked by allegations of abuse by marginalized Native women against Surêté du Québec officers in the northern city.

"It's all good news," said Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre director Edith Cloutier about the $6.1-million in funds pledged by the provincial government to her organization.

The funding targets two distinct projects. The largest – with $5.1 million of the funding – is a 24-unit housing project for Aboriginal families. The Friendship Centre has been working with the Société d'Habitation du Québec on that development since 2009.

"We've had difficulties throughout the process – we needed to have the city of Val-d'Or involved, and that was not the case with former mayor Fernand Trahan, who didn't want the project," Cloutier said. "But once Pierre Corbeil got elected two years ago, he made it a commitment to complete the project with the Friendship Centre."

After six years, the project is finally ready to become operational.

"This is good news but it's not a new initiative," said Cloutier. "It's been in the government system and we've been just on the verge of getting everything connected so the project could move forward."

The real news, she stressed, was that the remaining $1 million allocated by the government would mean that Willie's Place – the drop-in homeless day-centre operated by the Friendship Centre along with Val-d'Or emergency shelter La Piaule and other partners – would be funded until March 2017. This is good news for a venture that ran only from last December through to April as a pilot project before funding ran out and homeless people were once again left with nowhere to go during the day.

"We're in the process of getting Willie's Place up and running, combining that funding with the generous donation of $43,000 that came from the Creeco golf tournament," Cloutier said. "This helped the Friendship Centre get a new location for Willie's Place that we're in the process of renovating. We're now open in the morning and afternoon, Monday to Friday. It was a slow opening because we didn't have funding – we were managing with that donation from Creeco, and some funding that was granted through the CRA."

With the new money from the province, Willie's Place will add direct services for Aboriginal women trying to leave the sex trade. This will be supported by a Val-d'Or organization called Le gîte l'Autre porte, which supports sexually abused women.

Cloutier emphasized that crisis of confidence in the SQ first affected Aboriginal women, particularly those on the street and involved in prostitution.

"One thing that's going to be positive in all of this is that we were confronted as a community – Native and non-Native – in looking at our relationships," she said, noting that racism is now something the community is more willing to discuss.

Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre director Edith Cloutier

"I saw a very interesting resolution from the chamber of commerce. They're talking about supporting a commission on missing and murdered Aboriginal women, but they're also saying they need to do something, and they are partly responsible for having positive relationships. I saw a similar resolution coming from l'Université du Québec. I saw a resolution of support from the city of Val-d'Or, and the mayor is now saying we need to take a good look at how we treat our Aboriginal people who are our partners and our friends," explained Cloutier.

Cloutier frequently talked about reconciliation, which she says must take place on many different levels.

"The toughest one is going to be reconciliation with citizens and individuals," she observed. "That's what the Friendship Centre has been working on for 40 years. For 15 years, we've had our annual Gabriel Commanda Walk Against Racism, so I'm anxious to see what's going to happen with the walk in 2016. It's going to be interesting to see the response from the population, from the citizens. That's going to be where we need to invest a lot of energy in how, between citizens, we perceive one another."

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Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year

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Time for "self reflection"

Val-d'Or working to improve race relations, promises mayor

by Joel Barde

Val-d'Or Mayor Pierre Corbeil says the city is working to improve the safety of its Aboriginal residents following the bombshell allegations of abuse by local Sûreté du Québec (SQ) officers against Aboriginal women. He said he is working in concert with the Grand Council and MP Romeo Saganash to improve services and push for an impartial provincial inquiry into the allegations.

The determination follows the October announcement that the Cree Nation Government would suspend activities and events in Val-d'Or. The boycott represents a major blow to the local economy. The cancellation of the upcoming annual hockey and broomball tournament alone is said to represent an estimated $4 million hit.

Corbeil said increased funding for social services aimed at Aboriginal people represent a step in the right direction. The provincial government has promised $6.1-million in funding for the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre, the Willie's Place drop-in centre and a land-based healing program called Kinawit. He is also hopeful that social workers assigned to work with Val-d'Or SQ officers will have a positive impact.

Corbeil said now is a time for "self reflection" for some business owners and the SQ, who need to rethink their relations with Aboriginal clients. As for the Cree boycott, he said ending it is not a priority at this point. The focus, Corbeil said, is on reducing discrimination and racism and making Val-d'Or safer for Aboriginal residents and visitors.

In an interview that appeared in an earlier issue of *the Nation*, Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come said Corbeil was partially to blame for the boycott, which was unanimously supported by Grand Council members. "The mayor of Val-d'Or's first instinct, after the allegations came to light, was to show concern for the image of the town and the potential economic impacts of the allegations on the town's revenues," said Coon Come.

Corbeil did not want to address Coon Come's remarks and said his first priority upon hearing them was to make sure the women who came forward were safe. Corbeil stated that between 2,000 and 3,000 Indigenous people live in Val-d'Or, that they run businesses and play hockey and are represented at all levels in community.

"We need to reestablish the climate of confidence. It's not easy or spontaneous. But we have to continue working on it."

Corbeil does not, however, believe racism is systemic in his city. He said, rather, that it is an issue on an individual level.

David Kistabish, Chief of the Abitibiwinni First Nation, said he is happy with the media attention the allegations garnered, and is hopeful that there will be real change in Val-d'Or. Abitibiwinni is part of the Algonquin Nation and the majority of members live in Pikogan, located only an hour northeast of Val-d'Or. Many of the women alleging police mistreatment are Algonquin.

Kistabish, however, feels racism in Val-d'Or is indeed systemic. He said this is apparent whenever Aboriginal people walk into Val-d'Or stores.

"When Natives shop in Val-d'Or, business owners are constantly watching us," he said. "They think we will rob them."

Marcel Jolicour, the president of the Val-d'Or Chamber of Commerce, declined an interview, saying that the issue is very "sensitive" and that he would prefer to talk in a few weeks after discussions with his members.

Kistabish said the Cree economic boycott is a good pressure tactic, and pointed out that Algonquins have passed a similar resolution. He added that he would like to see Aboriginal officers join the SQ's Val-d'Or detachment, since they would have a better understanding of the issues facing the town's Aboriginal community.

Pierre Corbeil, Mayor of Val-d'Or

David Kistabish, Chief of Abitibiwinni First Nation

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wishes the Cree Nation a safe and Happy Holiday Season
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Ottawa prepares missing and murdered women inquiry

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett is launching a national inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women. The first phase of the inquiry was set to begin in early December, coinciding with the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women on December 6.

The first step of the process involves the consultation of the families of victims, who will have the chance to interact directly with the ministers involved, including Bennett, Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould and Status of Women Minister Patty Hajdu.

"As we promised, we will listen to the families first," said Bennett, "who have good experience with this and good instincts, and then we will engage with the other partners in the Aboriginal organizations, provinces and territories, (and) experts."

Bennett added that the consultation phase would help establish the framework of the inquiry, addressing its design, the number of commissioners, its length, how many families will be involved and the terms of reference.

Bennett says the December 6 deadline was important because the government wants to quickly address violence against women, particularly Native women.

photo by Robert Thivierge

Carolyn Bennett

"There is a real focus on this part of the issue, which is the disproportionate number of Indigenous women missing or murdered," she said.

A full inquiry expected to be launched in spring 2016.

Mistissini break-in

The Eeyou Eenou Police Force (EEPF) responded to a break-in at the Mistissini Municipal Garage at midnight on Saturday, Nov. 21. A municipal worker, who noticed the garage had been forcibly entered upon arriving for his late-night shift, reported the incident.

When Officers Winnie Trapper and George Coon arrived on the scene, they quickly determined that the break-in appeared to be more an act of vandalism than of theft. Three of the garage's windows were smashed and the municipal worker on hand noted that the gumball and peanut machines were also damaged.

Officer Robie Petawabano told *the Nation* that an investigation is ongoing.

Correction

In the last issue of *the Nation* (Vol. 23, No. 02), six-year-old Abel Mianscum was incorrectly identified as 11-year-old Abel Icebound. His father Michel Icebound contacted *the Nation* to correct a few details in the story of his son being attacked by a stray dog in Waswanipi.

After a wild dog attacked him at a Waswanipi playground, Abel ran to a nearby house owned by Chris Saganash for help. From there his cousin Oliver Icebound drove him to the local clinic on an ATV. His father Michel met them at the clinic and it was there that he found his son crying, still traumatized from the incident and not at the playground where the incident occurred.

Michel Icebound said that stray dogs are an ongoing issue in many northern communities; he recently received a call while on duty as a volunteer firefighter after another individual was attacked. Icebound said his son is still scared of animals and while Abel loves dogs he has been told to no longer go near them or try to pet them. Icebound hopes that community leaders will start taking this issue more seriously and that pet owners and community members become more responsible with their animals in the future.

feature

Hometown DREAM

Melisa Pash on opening for country star Johnny Reid in Chisasibi

by Melisa Pash

I have been performing since I was a little girl. It has always been a part of who I am. First it was piano recitals, then cello, orchestra, lip-synching and then finally singing my own songs with my guitar and a full band to crowds so large, it still blows me away.

For as long as I can remember, the moments before the show have always been the same. The sound of the public arriving on the other side of the curtain, butterflies in my stomach and deep breaths to try to tame the stage fright that always shows its nasty face, no matter how many performances I have under my belt. Those are the moments where I ask myself, what I have I gotten myself into once again?

I hear my name, walk out on stage and that's where the magic begins. Crossing the threshold from backstage to the lights and microphone is like crossing into a new dimension where everything feels right and I am pursuing my purpose. Every time, it feels like my entire life has been leading up to this moment. That is when I remember; this is what I was meant to do.

After taking some time off, I began feeling the urge to return to the stage. As if on cue, I was asked to perform in Chisasibi on Nov. 21 as an opening act. I was thrilled and asked who I would be opening for. The answer? Johnny Reid! The Johnny Reid!

I was so shocked I called my husband at work and asked if he was sitting down. I have performed with renowned artists before but no matter how far I have come, it's as if the little girl in me is star-struck and shouting Hooray!

I am very grateful for the experience. Johnny was very kind to everyone and is very grounded. He was truly happy to be in Chisasibi and took the time to speak with the people. Being from

Chisasibi myself, I was surrounded by family. It was such a pleasure to be able to offer a special meet-and-greet for my cousins with Johnny Reid in my dressing room after the show. There were a lot of pictures and selfies being taken!

During his show, Johnny Reid invited traditional drummers onstage. He even played the hand drum himself. It was so beautiful to watch, cultures blending through music. It's like the language of the heart. There were little girls dancing with him on stage, slow-mo running, and he even went down into the crowd to the ladies' delight! And then it was my turn...

The one and only Johnny Reid asked me up on stage to sing Change The World with him. It was surreal. I literally went from singing this song as I did the dishes in my kitchen to singing it live on stage with Johnny Reid. I am still in awe how it fell into my lap. When these things happen, it is absolute proof to me that when you pursue your passion, miracles occur. It's like the road is smooth and paved. Step away from your passion, prepare for bumps and obstacles.

Having my comeback performance in Chisasibi was a coincidence but such a wonderful one. After being away from being public for some time, the stage fright was more intense than usual. It was very comforting to have family there. The laughs and the hugs were just what I needed to pull it off.

I was born on the island of Fort George and I love to see where I came into the world. When I was young, I attended the Maamuitaau on the island and I was so captivated by the stage performances that a spark was lit inside of me. I remember, afterward, sitting on a large rock by the bay watching little jellyfish wishing with all my heart that I could sing like that too. I would love to go back and whisper into her ear, "Just follow your heart, your dreams will come true."

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SEASONS GREETINGS

MNP wishes you, your family and community a happy holiday season and prosperous new year.

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Contact Gordon Leebosh, CPA, CA at 514.228.7775 or gordon.leebosh@mnp.ca

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Of the South

Controversy rages over *of the North,* a documentary about the Inuit by a Quebec filmmaker who has never been North

by Jesse Staniforth

"Everything you need to know is in the first scene he picked, the scene with the nude Inuit girl sitting on the white man's leg," said an angry viewer as she left a theatre at the Université du Québec à Montréal in disgust half-way through a festival film screening. "He's chosen only the footage that makes Inuit look like animals. It's disgusting."

The object of her disgust was Dominic Gagnon's film, *of the North*, which is composed entirely of amateur video segments found on the Internet, including YouTube and pornographic sites. Having previously screened the film, I was sitting in the lobby as other audience members walked out during the second of two showings at the Montreal International Documentary Festival Nov. 12-22. Across from me sat festival publicist Caroline Rompré, who was surprised by the sudden uproar and media interest as prominent Inuit figures denounced the work as racist and for failing to secure rights to the footage it used.

of the North is 74 minutes long and has no narrative, no narrator nor any identifiable structure. It was financed in part from a $32,000 grant from the Conseil des Arts et Lettres du Québec.

Dominic Gagnon

"A real-life Eskimo"

The film begins with footage of a polar bear in a zoo tank smashing the tank glass. Soon after is the scene – lifted from a porn site – in which a nude Inuk woman sits on the knee of a white man. "I'm here with a truly adorable, real-life, goodness-to-gracious Eskimo!" says the man. "Tell me what it's like being an Eskimo, growing up in Alaska?"

"It's nothing different, other than, like, any other race," she shrugs.

The film cuts to a drunken, apologetic Inuk man who has crashed an all-terrain vehicle. Then there are images of hunting, buildings on fire in various communities, all with traditional drumming and singing dubbed overtop.

There are a handful of scenes depicting everyday activities: people spending time with their children, walking out on the land, interacting with animals, joking in a government office. But there is a great deal of footage of drunk, and violent Inuit people. A man covered in vomit falls over as he attempts to put on his shoes. A man stalks and beats a baby seal with his hands. A camera depicts husky carcasses in a dump. A drunken man attempts to drive a ski-doo over a snowbank, flips off of it, lands on his back, tries to get on the ski-doo again, then stumbles and falls into a puddle of water.

Gagnon uses traditional throat-singing as a soundtrack to a montage of scenes of a liquor still, a group of men watching orcas breeching from a boat, and a screaming drunk man throwing rocks at a police vehicle. This cuts to a 40-second pornographic clip of an Inuk woman spreading her vagina, followed by an image of a dog's anus.

Most northerners would find the hunting scenes unremarkable, but they seem positioned to shock southern audiences by Gagnon's editing choices. He cuts from a group of hunters butchering a whale immediately to a drunk Inuk throwing up into a toilet, his friend with the camera saying, "Aw, that's nasty."

Throughout there is footage of industrial machinery and development, and supporters of the film have argued this is intended to show that Inuit drunkenness and chaos are the product of industrial colonialism in the north. A scene of caribou eating raw sewage is

Still from *of the North*

apparently intended to make this point as well. In some cases, there is footage of children playing – in one case jumping on discarded mattresses, in another jumping on a trampoline while huskies howl all around them. At the end there is a title card reading *of the North*.

The filmmaker

During the question-and-answer period with Dominic Gagnon following the film, publicist Caroline Rompré and festival executive director Mara Gourd-Mercado demanded I turn off my voice recorder, saying I did not have permission to record the Q&A, though I was allowed to take notes. "We believe in free speech," said Rompré.

The first questioner asked if Gagnon could "have made this film without using footage of drunk Inuit?" Gagnon refused to answer the question.

The session alternated between hostile questions to audience members who couldn't understand why the film was so controversial. Media educator Jessie Curell, who has worked with Inuit and other Indigenous students in various northern communities, described the film as "a legal and ethical catastrophe," and asked Gagnon whether the people who had appeared in the film knew they were in it.

Gagnon responded flippantly, "Everyone will know because you will tell them."

In response to other questions, Gagnon revealed he has never travelled to the Arctic, saying he didn't need to visit the region to understand it. "It's a fantasy… the point is to provoke," he said.

On the issue of rights to the footage and music used in the film, Gagnon was unrepentant. "I refuse to make a consensual film," he said. "I'm a punk and I don't like being told what to put in. I have the right to use what's already public and republish it."

He then apologized if he wasn't making perfect sense, explaining he was drunk.

During the Q&A session, the National Film Board's director of French programming, Colette Loumède, stood up and said, "I thought this film was beautiful. I don't understand the outrage. We don't have to fall into a moral judgement about it."

When *the Nation* attempted to reach Loumède at the NFB for an explanation, we were told she would make no further comment.

The Nation sat down with Dominic Gagnon following the Q&A session.

"I picked up everything I could find on the Arctic that was, let's say, homemade," Gagnon said. "And then I ended up having 500 hours of footage. I proceeded by subtraction, like a sculptor. It's like getting the sugar out of the fruit, making alcohol. Of course the piece is extreme. But it's not my imagination – I didn't stage anything, I didn't force anything. Even YouTube and Google were helping me in my search, because they know my profile, they know what I like. It was like a ghost collaborator. I ended up picking up this footage like you go fish or go hunt."

Gagnon admitted he had no previous knowledge of the North, nor any knowledge of Inuit culture. "I saw a film called *Nanook of the North*. Nothing else: that's the only idea I have of the North."

Asked if he was familiar with stereotypes about Inuit, he responded by asking what the difference was between stereotypes and facts. I said that stereotypes were widely believed, but were not factually correct.

"So I don't know any stereotypes about Inuits," he said.

Iqaluit filmmaker Alethea Arnaquq-Baril had, earlier in the day, said she was upset that the film tipped heavily toward images portraying Inuit who were drunk, violent, neglectful, cruel to animals, and

self-destructive. Gagnon was asked for a reaction.

"She's totally right," he answered. "One of the things I said tonight is that I have the right to make a precise film. I wanted to make a film specifically about those people who have that kind of life – the drunks, those who neglect their children."

When told that watching his film with so many images underlining commonly held prejudices against the Inuit felt like white-supremacist propaganda, Gagnon was quick to counter.

"I think you're f*cked up," he retorted. "I've seen, in my film, lots of light – people taking care of their children, entertaining them, having love for them."

Of the intoxicated people, Gagnon said he has a great deal of compassion for them.

"I'm sorry, but I'm a drunk, I'm a toxicomane [drug addict], I have no prejudice about how they live right now. They have the right to have fun a little bit, even if they're drunks and sociopaths. Half the people here already were drunk or under the influence of drugs. So who are we to judge them?"

Isn't it different, I suggested, when you're making a film about one of the most marginalized and vulnerable populations in Canada?

"Let's give them a break," he said. "They can have fun hunting and fishing and they can get drunk, and I don't care about it. At least there's one film that portrayed that. I showed it to Kanaki people in New Caledonia and they recognized themselves in it. Do you think they were crying? They were partying, they were smoking big joints like hell, drinking kava and whiskey and dancing to the music, saying, 'Those are our bros.'"

Asked whether those who hated Indigenous people would see their prejudices supported by his film, Gagnon responded, "I don't work for [right-wing media] and they will never see my films. But if they saw it, they would be jealous of their lives – hunting, fishing, drinking with friends. Most people are alone. They don't know shit about what their lives are about. Those guys are a cultural avant-garde, and I have full respect for them."

Kelly Amaujaq Fraser

The response

A recording of this interview was later played for Inuk singer Kelly Amaujaq Fraser during a discussion of the film on CKUT-FM's Native Solidarity News.

"That was one of the most racist conversations I've ever heard," Fraser responded. "For someone to

Regional Radio Show on Housing
from the Capital Works and Services Department / Housing and ownership in the Cree Nation
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say that politicians are jealous of Inuit who are suffering from poverty, effects of colonization, lack of infrastructure for employment? I don't think any politicians are jealous of Inuit living in these terrible conditions, and budgets keep getting cut. This video is a poor representation of what is really going on."

Fraser's songs and images appear in the video. She claims that, contrary to Gagnon's contention, he never contacted her for permission.

During the same program, Inuk filmmaker Stephen Agluvak Puskas said the film disgusted him. "I felt physically sick watching it," Puskas said. "This is what people think of me and my family?"

"I understand we still have struggles in our communities – directly caused by assimilation, from the government, from colonization," said Fraser. "For someone to use every video he can to make Inuit look stereotypical, and showing it when Inuit have not consented, is ridiculous. This is a terrible film. It has no originality. I was very injured when I saw it. Seeing my work in there was truly upsetting."

William Tagoona is a singer/songwriter and broadcaster in Kuujjuak, where he also works as a communications officer for the Makivik Corporation (though his comments here are his personal ones). "As a residential school survivor I am sickened by the film," he commented. "For the whole 74 minutes I was red-faced – not from anger, but from feeling victimized. The film producer was defiantly raging his hatred on Inuit by purposely finding any trash he can find on YouTube and decorating it with some peaceful images to try and colour the true intent of the film."

Tagoona urged Indigenous people to take the film as a warning about uploading footage of themselves to YouTube.

"It is public domain," he said, "and there are people out there who will find ways you never imagined to utilize it to their benefit."

The loudest critic of the film was Cambridge Bay's Polaris-prize winner Tanya Tagaq, whose music also appeared in the film without her permission. (During the Q&A, Gagnon acknowledged that he had already heard from Tagaq and she was "going tantrum" at him. He has since agreed to remove her music.)

"You spend your life living in a shroud of racism due to post-colonial fallout, and some white piece of shit makes a film highlighting all the things that hurt you, your whole life as a child – and you try to think this is something like art? I've lost friends and family to alcohol. I grew up seeing so many people hurting. So many of us overcome and live amazing sober lives, but addiction comes from trauma, and just to be poking fun at that is so unnerving," said Tagaq.

Inuk filmmaker Stephen Agluvak Puskas

Tagaq said Gagnon's focus represents a tiny portion of life in Inuit communities.

"There are so many beautiful, wonderful, open people working toward survival and filtering the last couple of hundred years of pain, and curing it, through our love for our children, our love of the land," she explained. "We have been so abused by the Canadian government and we're having massive issues with missing and murdered Indigenous women and disproportionate rates of suicide. So for some festival to feel they have the right to play this stupid film… it's just reprehensible and I'm not happy with them. They should treat people with respect."

The festival

For their part, festival representatives – executive director Gourd-Mercado, artistic director Charlotte Selb, and board president Sarah Spring – defended their choice to screen Gagnon's film during a meeting with *the Nation* a week after the controversy erupted.

"We can't be naïve that we're in Canada, and it's different to present this film here than to present it in Denmark or New Caledonia, where it was shown before," Selb acknowledged. "We should have been more careful on that level. Should we not have programmed the film? Should we have accompanied it differently? We're still in the process of considering that, because we want to take into consideration all the responses we've received. It's our duty to figure out

Department of
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what we did wrong, to accept responsibility, and to correct what we need to correct."

When she first viewed the film last April, Selb said she saw it as an interesting discourse on colonialism and its effects in the North. "It has a certain vision of very hard desperation in that life, that is the product of colonialism both in the past and in the present."

Gourd-Mercado added that she had felt the film "really questioned the image of the Inuit themselves and what they post online, and what we see online. I thought it was a double-take on the issue of how you portray yourself on the Internet."

Both, however, admitted that there was no discussion of the possibility that the film might be seen as racist. Their team does not contain any Indigenous members, and there were no Indigenous members of the film-competition jury assessing Gagnon's film. Furthermore, the festival did not attempt to consult with any organization representing Inuit specifically or Indigenous people generally before showing the film.

Throughout the conversation, Gourd-Mercado and Selb underlined that they wished to take responsibility for the manner in which the film was presented. Noting that part of the French name of the festival is "Encounters" (Rencontres Internationales du Documentaire de Montréal), they said they felt that making a place for discussion, exchanges and questioning was important, particularly with difficult films.

Gourd-Mercado denied that racial prejudice played a part in the film's selection.

"There's a difference between a bias against Indigenous people and a poor choice," she said. "They're not at all the same. It's too easy to immediately throw the festival and everything it's accomplished out the window because of one error."

Still from *of the North*

Aftermath

The festival later issued a press release responding to "numerous complaints" about *of the North*. The statement read, in part, "Far from seeing *of the North* as a racist work, it was programmed as a critical discourse on colonialism and its still devastating impacts, through a montage of images recorded and uploaded to YouTube by Inuit peoples. We believe that this film confronts stereotypes that have afflicted Inuit peoples."

To many discussing the issue online, this appeared to be an endorsement of the film and a defense of its imagery against charges of racism.

"Non-apology and no action," said Iqaluit's Jessie Aputi Fraser. "Providing more 'context' wouldn't have made this film less racist or hurtful to Inuit. The film does not 'confront' stereotypes, it reinforces them."

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Chocolate cookies for Santa?

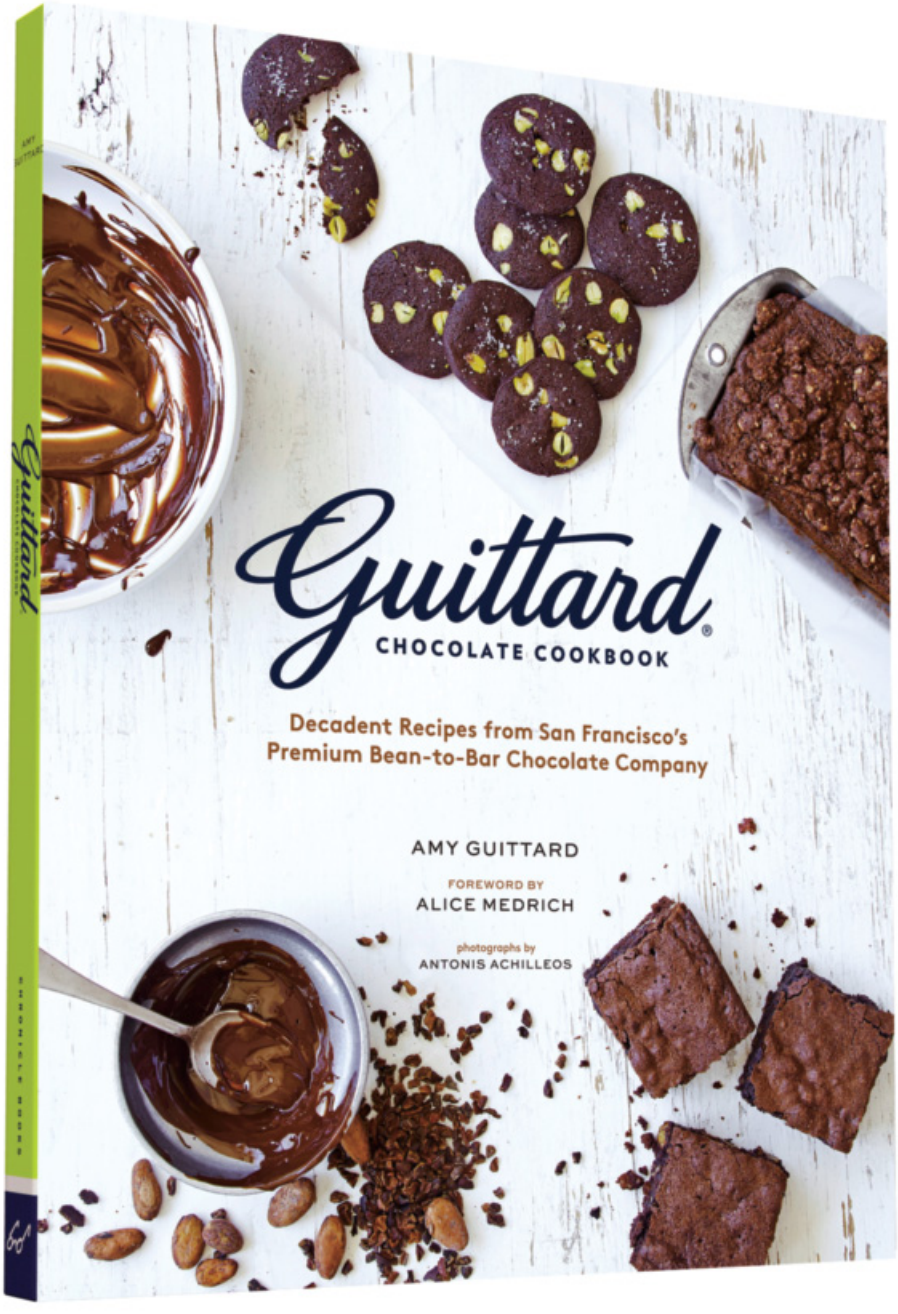
Chocolate recipes from one of the world's finest chocolate producers

by Amy German

For chocolate lovers the Christmas season is all about trying to see how many different ways you can make something from one of the world's most celebrated foods.

If you haven't yet purchased something special for the chocolate lover on your list, the *Guittard Chocolate Cookbook* is 100% devoted to recipes for fine desserts featuring their own premium brand of chocolate. However, if you are unable to order some of this fanciness online before St. Nick's visit to the communities, never fear: regular baking chocolate can be substituted as can higher grade chocolate ordered online. If you are substituting however, just make sure to measure out what you need on a kitchen scale so that your measurements are dead on.

As for the book, it features page after page of chocolate recipes for mind-blowing concoctions and confections. Beautifully photographed and presented simply, Amy Guittard's chocolate cookbook is perfect for an under-the-tree gift for chocolate lovers or an ideal self-gift if you have a chocolate lover in the family you want to please.



Molten Chocolate Cookies

When you need to slow down, sip a latte, and read a book, this is the cookie you'll want on a pretty plate beside you. They're big (only eight cookies per baking sheet!) and very rich, with a crisp exterior and gooey centre – everything you want from a chocolate indulgence. I'll whip up a batch and keep some dough in the freezer for those moments that require something special (or when a serious chocolate craving hits). Be careful not to overcook these or you won't get the fudgy middle. If you leave the dough in the refrigerator overnight, put it on the counter and let it sit at room temperature for 20 minutes before baking.

- 2¼ cups [340 g] Guittard Semisweet Chocolate Baking Wafers
- 3 tbsp unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1 cup [120 g] all-purpose flour
- ½ tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp salt
- 2 large eggs
- ½ cup [100 g] sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

Preheat the oven to 375°F [190°C]. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.

Melt the chocolate wafers and butter together using a hot water bath or the microwave oven. Stir until completely melted and smooth. Remove the bowl from the water if you used a hot water bath and set aside to cool.

In a small bowl, combine the flour, baking powder, and salt. Set aside.

In a large bowl, with a hand mixer, beat together the eggs, sugar, and vanilla until pale yellow and slightly thickened, 2 to 3 minutes. Stir in the cooled melted chocolate mixture. Gradually stir in the flour mixture until just incorporated. Cover the dough with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 15 minutes, or up to overnight.

Peanut Butter Dark Chocolate Thumbprint Cookies

What makes the peanut butter-chocolate combination so irresistible? Perhaps it's the blend of sweet and salty. Or maybe it's the play on textures – melted chocolate with softly whipped peanut butter. This thumbprint cookie celebrates everything that's good about the classic PB-DC combination. One bite takes me back to Saturday mornings with the Muppets (yup, my brother and I were allowed to eat cookies for breakfast; lucky ducks, I know). Peanut butter and dark chocolate: always a win, any time of day.

Cookies

- 1¼ cups [150 g] all-purpose flour
- ¾ tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp salt
- ½ cup [110 g] unsalted butter, at room temperature
- ½ cup [100 g] granulated sugar
- ½ cup [100 g] firmly packed dark brown sugar
- ½ cup [125 g] crunchy peanut butter
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

Eeyou Istchee James Bay
Regional Government

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL SITUATION

Fellow residents:
Under Section 474.1 of the *Cities and Towns Act* (CQLR, c. C-19), I am pleased to provide you this report on the financial situation of the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government. This report is submitted a few weeks before the presentation of the 2016 budget predictions that are expected on January 27, 2016, under the responsibility of the Regional Government. This report covers the following aspects:

- The consolidated financial statements for the 2014 fiscal years and the report from the independent auditor;
- The three-year capital spending plan for the years 2015-2016-2017;
- The financial situation for the year 2015;
- The remuneration and expenses allowance of the members of Council;
- The main orientations of the 2016 budget;
- The list of contracts awarded between October of 2014 and September of 2015.

LATEST FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

During the preparation of the 2014 budgets, including the localities of Valcanton, Villebois and Radisson, along with the forestry fund, we anticipated total revenues of $13,566,380 while we finished the year with revenues of $14,901,861. The consolidated fiscal year 2014 ended with a surplus of $2,593,018, including an amount of $1,118,785 that was set up as reserves from grants received for the governance and not spent completely in 2014. The financial statements were prepared and audited by the firm Raymond, Chabot, Grant, Thornton.

THREE-YEAR CAPITAL SPENDING PLAN FOR THE YEARS 2015-2016-2017

During the fiscal year 2015, the Regional Government planned capital spending of $1,100,810 to complete the following work:

Leasehold improvements at the head office	$100,000
Architect fees for the new tourist information centre	$50,000
Replacement of the computer servers	$20,000
Preparation of the specifications and equipment – IP Telephone system	$50,000
Organisational diagnostic	$35,000
Purchase of a lift truck – Public works	$50,000
Boat ramp and rest area – LG-3 Reservoir	$70,000
Boat ramp –Waswanipi Lake	$40,000
Refection of the EIJBRG website	$20,000
Rewrite of the planning and zoning by-laws	$50,000
FTQR work in the localities	$615,810

Most of this work will be completed by the end of the year. Also, some were purposely postponed, such as the boat ramp at Waswanipi Lake.

PRELIMINARY INDICATIONS FOR 2015

The consolidated budget for the year includes balanced revenues and expenses of $14,748,315. Under the Agreement on Governance that established the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government, the tax rates cannot exceed those of 2012 but could be reduced based on the value of the assessment roll. However, the Government of Quebec also committed to finance the implementation of the Regional Government for a period of five years.

REAL ESTATE WEALTH OF THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

The year 2015 is the second year of the three-year evaluation roll 2014-2015-2016 filed on October 26, 2013. The total real estate wealth is $390,229,100 and it is made up of $366,407,560 in taxable property values and $23,821,540 in non-taxable property values.

REMUNERATION AND EXPENSE ALLOWANCE

As indicated in the Act, here is the 2015 remuneration of the Council members of the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government and the localities, including the expenses allowance related to the position:

	Chairperson	Vice-chairperson	Councillors/Members
EIJBRG	$53,091	$40,480/year	$17,697
Radisson	$26,208	$100/month	$8,736
Valcanton	$15,000	$100/month	$5,060
Villebois	$15,180		$5,060
Executive Committee (EIJBRG)			$30,360

- One 33.33% share of the remunerated of the EIJBRG is paid on a fixed basis and the other 66.67% is paid based on the physical attendance to the meetings of Council.

MAIN ORIENTATIONS OF THE 2016 BUDGET

The years 2014 and 2015 were a period of consolidation for the implementation of the Act establishing the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government.
In 2016, we are facing numerous projects and challenges, including:

- Implementation of the emergency measures plan
- Training of the personnel in information technology and civil security
- Establishment of the Integrated Land and Resources Management Panels
- Construction of a tourist information centre in the Matagami region
- Leasehold improvements at the head office
- Consolidation of the organisational structure
- Rewrite of the zoning by-law
- Development of phases II and III of the website
- Completion of work as part of the FTQC

In conclusion, I am very proud to thank sincerely my colleagues on Council and all the personnel for their collaboration.
In addition, you can rest assured of my complete co-operation in the continuation of our first term on the Council of the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government.

Manon Cyr
Chairperson

Appendix to the Chairperson's report on the financial situation of the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government
Under Section 474.1 of the Cities and Towns Act, the mayor submits the list of all contracts bringing expenses of more than $25,000 signed since the last Council meeting" "during which the mayor submitted a report on the financial situation of the municipality. This list includes contracts of more than $2,000 signed with one same contractor when the sum of these contracts represent a total expenditure of over $25,000. This list indicates, for each contract, the name of the cotnractor, the purpose of the contract and the amount.

Locality of VALCANTON

Name of contractor	Nature of the contract	Amount	
Municipality of Normétal	Fire protection	27,333.20	$
Grepco Construction	Windows at the town hall	41,714.16	
	Total	**69,047.36**	**$**

Locality of VILLEBOIS

Name of contractor	Nature of the contract	Amount	
Proulx & Genesse	Equipment rental and road maintenance	65,893.95	$
	Total	**65,893.95**	**$**

Locality of RADISSON

Name of contractor	Nature of the contract	Amount	
Entreprises Rodrigue Piquette Inc.	Street light replacement	38,264.15	$
Corprate	Fuel for municipal vehicles	61,390.32	
Hydro-Québec	Electricity for municipal buildings	87,124.87	
Lou-tec	Equipment rental	43,138.64	
Motoparts	Purchase of 2 compressors	46,046.34	
Nicol Auto	GMC Sierra 2500 pick-up truck	40,255.05	
Wolseley	Fire hydrants and equipment	52,172.87	
	Total	**368,392.24**	**$**

INTRAMUNICIPAL LOTS AND SCATTERED LOTS FUND

Name of contractor	Nature of the contract	Amount	
Anctil, Ayotte et Associés (Groupe 3A) inc.	Silviculture work and forestry operations	657,086.50	$
Ressources Baie-James	Professional fees - planning, forest management and site monitoring	31,490.00	
	Total	**688,576.50**	**$**

EEYOU ISTCHEE JAMES BAY REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

Name of contractor	Nature of the contract	Amount	
Association des propriétaires de chalets du Lac Cavan	Repair of the access road	56,636.24	$
Association des propriétaires de chalets du Lac Opémisca	Repair of the access road	23,400.00	
Corprate	Fuel for municipal vehicles	25,918.86	
Club Motoneige Matagami	Machinery rental and payment of grants	62,697.53	
Club quad les Lynx du nord de Chapais	Grant - Bridge replacement	100,713.00	
Comité citoyens du Lac Matagami	Repair of the access road	40,296.45	
Dery et Associés	Organisational diagnostic and professional services	59,057.54	
Foss National Leasing	Fuel for vehicles	32,694.92	
Interclôtures Abitem	Fence for the Desmaraisville well	29,651.32	
Lemieux Ryan et Associés	General insurance	41,246.69	
Lettrage Waldi inc.	Signage on the territory	31,958.77	
PG Solutions inc.	Software and computer support	35,303.07	
Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton	Annual audit	78,192.21	
Regroupement des propriétaires du Lac Turgeon	Road drainage	36,159.00	
Ressources Baie-James	Database design (Natural resources) and mushroom trail development	28,512.31	
Signotech	Signage on the territory	62,245.45	
Société d'analyse immobiliere	Assessment service	360,685.19	
Société de développement de la Baie-James	Rental of town hall and lodging service (Km 381)	107,944.85	
Traduction et audiovisuel Nishnabe	Translation of council	136,172.49	
Union des municipalités du Québec	General insurance	31,850.96	
	Total	**1,381,336.85**	**$**
	Grand total	**2,573,246.90**	**$**

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May this holiday season
fill your home with peace & joy.

Merry Christmas
& Happy New Year

The Niskamoon Board of Directors & Staff

2 Lakeshore Road, Nemaska, Québec J0Y 3B0
www.niskamoon.org info@niskamoon.org

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NISKAMOON
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Happy Holidays and
peace on earth for the
coming year!

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Communication Society
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Mistissini, Quebec, G0W1C0
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year filled with health, joy and peace.

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Filling

2 oz [50 g] Guittard Bittersweet Chocolate Baking Bar, broken into small pieces
2 tbsp unsalted butter, at room temperature
¾ tsp light corn syrup

To make the cookies: Preheat the oven to 350°F [180°C]. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.

In a small bowl, combine the flour, baking soda, baking powder, and salt. Set aside.

In a large bowl, with a hand mixer, beat together the butter, granulated sugar, and brown sugar until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Stir in the peanut butter, egg, and vanilla. Gradually stir in the flour mixture until combined.

Roll pieces of dough into 1 in [2.5 cm] balls and place on the prepared baking sheets about 1 in [2.5 cm] apart.

Bake for 10 minutes, then remove from the oven. Using a small spoon, make a small indentation in the middle of each cookie. Return the cookies to the oven for another 6 to 7 minutes, or until set. (After removing from the oven, you may need to use the spoon again to make the indentations clear.) Transfer the cookies to a wire rack to cool completely, 1 to 2 hours.

To make the filling: Melt the chocolate, butter, and corn syrup together using a hot water bath or the microwave oven. Stir until completely melted and smooth. Remove the bowl from the water if you used a hot water bath and set aside to cool slightly, 3 to 5 minutes.

When the cookies are completely cool, use a spoon to fill each indentation with the chocolate filling. Set aside and let the chocolate filling cool and harden, 1 to 2 hours. (If your kitchen is warm, refrigerate the cookies so the filling can harden.) Store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 1 week.

Makes 24 1 in [2.5 cm] cookies.

Salted Chocolate Shortbread

My friend Ben harvests sea salt on the Oregon coast. He traipses knee-deep out into the chilly Pacific Ocean to gather buckets of water and then he carries the saltwater home, where time and heat will work their slow magic. The result? Beautifully intricate flakes of sea salt. As with anything you cook or bake, using good ingredients is crucial, even if that ingredient has just a small role in the final product. Everything from the cacao beans we purchase down to the fleur de sel sprinkled on top of these cookies are top quality, which is what makes this recipe so good. The Cocoa Rouge adds richness to this shortbread, and the buttery yet crunchy texture can satisfy a craving at any time of day.

1¼ cups [150 g] all-purpose flour
1/3 cup [35 g] Guittard Cocoa Rouge (Dutch-processed unsweetened cocoa powder)
½ tsp baking soda
½ tsp salt
¾ cup [170 g] unsalted butter, at room temperature
¼ cup [50 g] granulated sugar
½ cup [100 g] firmly packed dark brown sugar
¾ tsp vanilla extract
Fleur de sel for sprinkling

Preheat the oven to 350°F [180°C]. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.

In a small bowl, combine the flour, cocoa powder, baking soda, and salt. Set aside.

In a large bowl, using a hand mixer, beat together the butter, granulated sugar, brown sugar, and vanilla until light and smooth, about 3 minutes. Gradually stir in the flour mixture until combined. Roll the dough into 1½ in [4 cm] balls and set them on the prepared baking sheets, leaving 1 in [2.5 cm] between the balls. Use the bottom of a flat cup to slightly flatten each ball, and then sprinkle the balls with fleur de sel.

Bake for 13 to 15 minutes, or until the tops are cracked. Transfer the cookies to a wire rack to cool. Store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 1 week.

Makes 28 2 in [5 cm] cookies.

CREE OUTFITTING AND TOURISM ASSOCIATION
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ASSOCIATION CRIE DE POURVOIRIE ET DE TOURISME

Eeyou Istchee Tourism

Wishing you and your families
a Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year!

We would also like to inform the public
that we will now be located at 205 Opemiska Meskino
at the Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute

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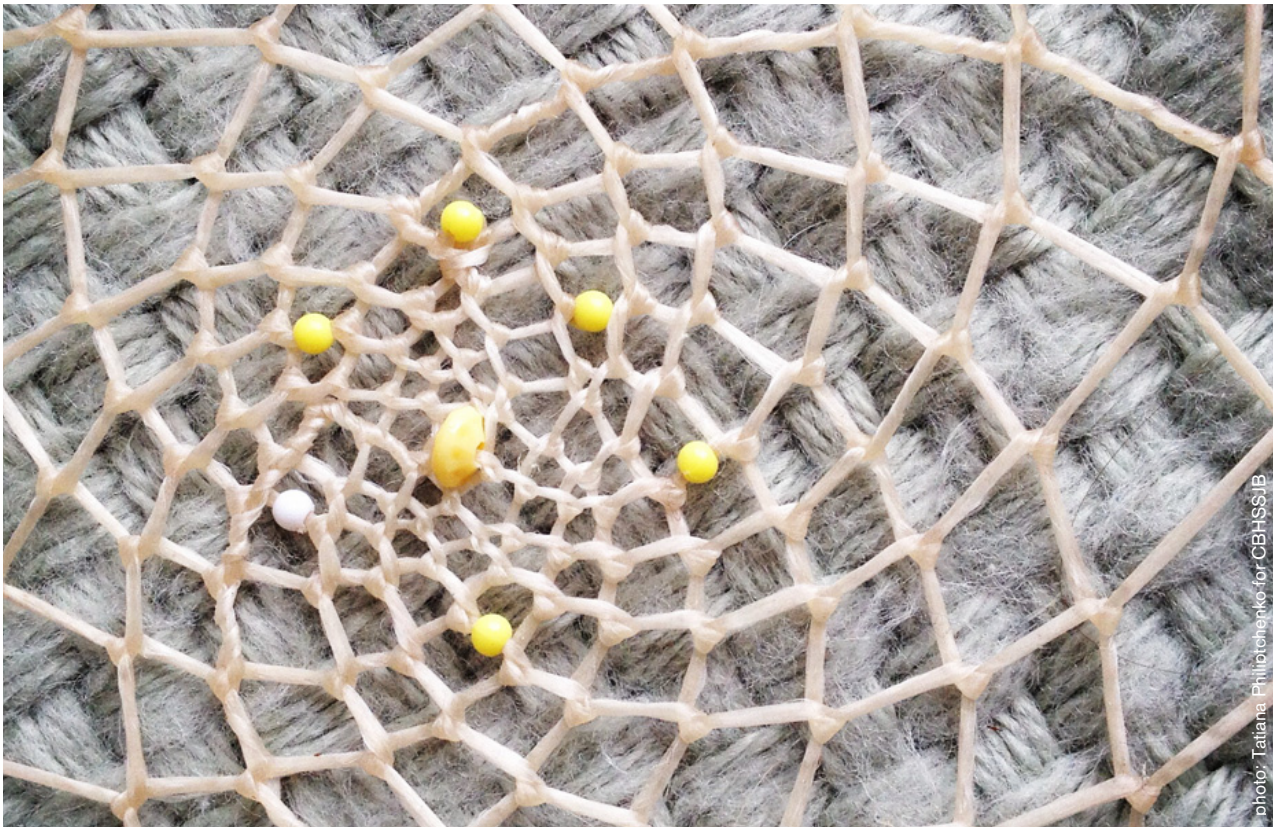

photo: Tatiana Philotchenko for CBHSSJB

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Québec

Holiday entertaining

Delightful dishes that will have your guests singing Hallelujah!

by Amy German

If you're looking for an impressive Christmas spread or tasty snack ideas between meals, culinary stars Lidia Matticchio Bastianich and Nigella Lawson both have new books that will help you put your best dishes forward during the holiday season. *Lidia's Mastering the Art of Italian Cuisine* is a must-have for lovers of Italian food and for those looking for a challenge in the kitchen.

A basic guide to Italian food that takes you from newbie to knowledgeable, Bastianich and daughter Tanya Bastianich Manuali provide section after section on the produce of Italy, cheeses, fresh pasta, meats, kitchen tools and cooking techniques.

Featuring many recipes from Bastianich's television shows, this beautifully written book approaches recipes in simple ways that will help you create your own marvelous Italian spread for friends and family.

Why not check out this zucchini appetizer and hearty beef dish for a holiday evening when the gang is headed your way.

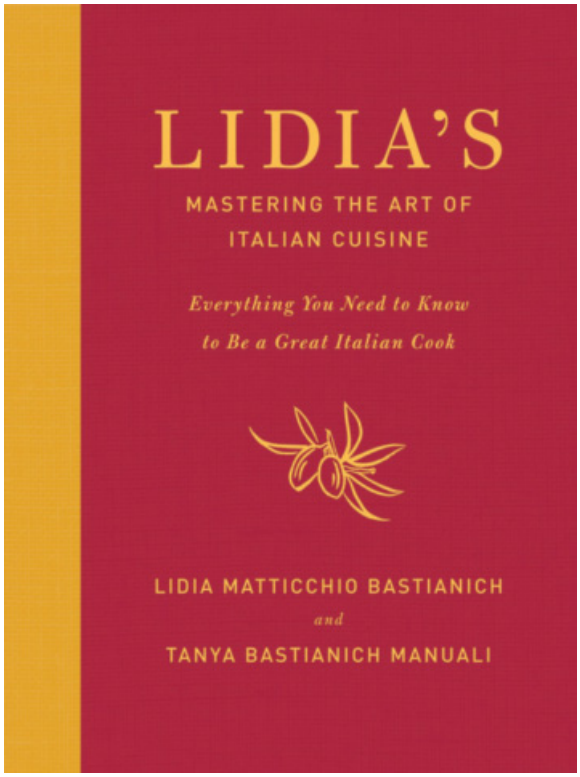
Manzo Brasato con Cipolle (Braised Beef with Onions)

(serves about 6)

- 6 garlic cloves, crushed and peeled
- 3 medium onions, cut into chunks
- 3 celery stalks, cut into chunks
- 2 carrots, peeled and cut into chunks
- ½ cup sliced almonds
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 5-pound beef rump roast
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt
- 6 whole cloves
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 3 cups dry white wine
- 4 fresh bay leaves

In a food processor, combine the garlic and onions, and process to make a smooth paste. Scrape it into a bowl. Without washing the food-processor bowl, add the celery, carrots, and almonds to the processor, and process to a paste.

In a large Dutch oven, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat.



Excerpted from Lidia's Mastering The Art of Italian Cuisine: Everything You Need to Know to Be a Great Italian Cook by Lidia Matticchio Bastianich with Tanya Bastianich Manuali. Copyright © 2015 by Tutti a Tavola, LLC. Excerpted by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Penguin Random House LLC, New York, and in Canada by Appetite by Random House, a division of Penguin Random House Canada, Ltd., Toronto. All rights reserved.

Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton
An instinct for growth™

During these times of celebration, giving and coming together, we wish to thank you for the trust you have placed in us. The entire Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton team wishes you Happy Holidays and a very successful 2016.

Sylvain Faucher • Partner
Val-d'Or office: 819-825-6226
faucher.sylvain@rcgt.com

Richard Rémillard • Partner
Montreal office: 514-393-4754
remillard.richard@rcgt.com

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Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government

Au nom de tous les membres du conseil du Gouvernement régional d'Eeyou Istchee Baie-James, nous vous souhaitons de passer d'agréables fêtes. Que 2016 vous apporte santé, bonheur et joie.

On behalf of all the Council Members of the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government, we wish you Happy Holidays. May 2016 bring you health, happiness and joy.

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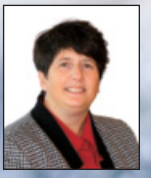

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Season the roast with a teaspoon of the salt, and brown on all sides, about 8 minutes. Remove it to a plate, and stud it with the cloves.

Add the onion-garlic mixture to the pot, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the mixture has dried out and begins to stick to the bottom of the pan, about 7 minutes. Add the vegetable-almond mixture, reduce the heat to medium, and cook until the mixture has dried out, stirring often to keep the almonds from burning, about 4 minutes.

Make a space in the bottom of the pan, and add the tomato paste. Cook and stir in this hot spot until it toasts and darkens a shade or two, about 2 minutes, then stir it into the vegetables. Pour in the white wine, bring it to a boil, and boil until it is reduced by about half, about 6 minutes. Add the roast, and pour in 6 cups hot water (or enough just to cover the roast in liquid). Add the bay leaves, and season with the remaining 2 teaspoons salt. Cover, simmer gently, and cook, turning the meat occasionally, until it is very tender and a knife inserted in the centre slides out very easily, about 3 to 3½ hours. You may need to add a little more water if it reduces too quickly; you want to keep at least three-quarters of the meat covered in liquid until the end. Let the meat rest in the sauce for 30 minutes, remove the bay leaves, then cut into thin slices, and serve topped with the hot sauce.

Frittelle di Zucchine (Zucchini Fritters)

(serves 6)

Vegetable oil, for frying
2 medium zucchini (8 ounces), washed and trimmed
3 large eggs
3 tablespoons chopped fresh Italian parsley
Grated zest of 1 lemon
⅔ cup all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon kosher salt, plus more for seasoning
Lemon wedges, for serving

In a straight-sided skillet, heat 1 inch of vegetable oil to 360 degrees. Grate the zucchini on the medium holes of a box grater onto a kitchen towel. Tightly wrap the zucchini in the towel, and wring out as much liquid as possible. Beat the eggs in a large bowl. Stir in the zucchini, breaking up any clumps with a fork. Stir in the parsley and lemon zest.

Sift together the flour, baking powder, and salt. Stir into the egg mixture until just combined – don't over mix.

Brush a soup spoon with vegetable oil and with it drop dollops of batter into the oil, patting the fritters lightly with the back of a spatula to flatten slightly. Fry, turning once, until golden on both sides and cooked through, about 2 minutes per side. Fry them in batches. The fritters are cooked when a fork inserted in the center comes out clean. Drain cooked fritters on paper towels, and season lightly with salt. Serve fritters right away, with lemon wedges.

May the Peace and Joy of the holiday season be with you throughout the coming year.
Merry Christmas from all of us.

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Santa brought the 2016 models early, come see!

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Joyeux Noël et
Bonne Année

Cree-Naskapi Commission
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La commission Crie-Naskapie

Nigella Lawson

When it comes to home cooking, no other name is as synonymous with glorious home-cooked meals as is Nigella Lawson.

In her latest outing, Simply Nigella: Feel Good Food, Lawson offers meal ideas in an anecdotal tone and with photographs that will leave you lusting for what you've just seen.

A master at combining colours and flavours, she includes all sorts of sections on a lighter and quicker fare for when you are on the go, "bowl food" for those in need of a perfectly balanced bowl of comfort to take in, dishes that redefine the dining experience and wonders that cook slowly, simmering for hours, allowing the home cook some time to "breathe" while producing culinary magic.

Like any Lawson cookbook, however, the sweet section at the back is just as majestic, enticing and creative. With recipes like Warm Raspberry and Lemon Cake or a Dark and Sumptuous Chocolate Cake, it's hard to go wrong.

If you are looking for a perfect Christmas ham menu, check out the following three recipes and maybe gift-wrap *Simply Nigella* as a Christmas tree treat as it is a serious palate pleaser for any home cook!

Slow-Cooked Molasses Ham

I always like a ham on Christmas Eve, which means that there is cold ham as well as cold turkey for the following days (and general sandwich duty), and this is the way to cook it to make your life easier. And if the 12-15 hours' cooking doesn't suit you, you can cook it for 5 hours in a 350°F oven instead, before proceeding with the glaze.

The juices that collect from the first step of cooking are gorgeously flavoured, but very intense. I pour a little of them over the cut slices of meat, but go sparingly.

If you are able to buy a cured, uncooked ham then you may well prefer to soak it in several changes of cold water before cooking, to reduce the saltiness, and you should check the information from the producer for more details. Fully cooked hams are more common in North America and if you use one of these, then try to choose one with the rind still on and not spiral cut. Smear the rind of the ham with 2 tablespoons of molasses then wrap it in a baggy aluminum-foil package with tightly

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The Cree Mineral Exploration Board
Happy Holidays to all!
We are proud to announce this year's winners of the Rock Competition.
Congratulations go to:
Edward Georgekish • Joël George• Arthur Bosum • Richard Rick

sealed edges. Sit it in a roasting pan and reheat following the producer's instructions for oven temperature and time. When the ham has heated through uncover it and reserve juices and use sparingly to moisten ham once sliced. Carefully remove the rind, leaving a good layer of fat, then follow the instructions for glazing the ham.

By the way, when you measure out your molasses, it'll make life a lot easier if you oil your receptacle first.

7½-pound boneless cured uncooked ham, rind on
½ cup molasses

For the glaze:

Approx. 1 tablespoon whole cloves
¼ cup molasses
¼ cup turbinado sugar
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

Preheat the oven to 450°F, and let your ham come to room temperature.

Line a large roasting pan with a layer of aluminum foil, and then sit a wire rack on top of this foil. Tear off a large piece of foil (big enough to wrap around the ham) and place this over the rack on the roasting pan. Tear off a second large piece of foil and place on top, but in the opposite way to the first, so you have 4 corners of foil ready to wrap your ham in.

Sit the ham on the foil and then pour the molasses over it, straight onto the rind, letting it run down both sides. Don't worry too much about spreading it over the ham, as once it's in the heat of the oven, it will coat the ham well enough.

Now lift up the sides and ends of the first layer of foil and make a seal at the top, leaving some room around the ham, then seal the ends. Then take up the other piece of foil and do the same: you are trying to create a good seal around the ham, so pinch together any open gaps that remain. Finally, tear off another piece of foil and put over the top of the whole parcel, making sure it's well sealed.

Put carefully into the oven and let it cook for 30 minutes, then turn the oven down to 200°F and leave for a further 15-24 hours.

The following day, take the ham out of the oven and open up the foil seal. It will have made some liquid, which you can reserve to moisten the carved meat later. Carefully lift the ham out onto a board, snip and remove the string, and peel off the rind to leave a good layer of fat.

Increase the oven temperature to 400°F. Using a sharp knife, cut a diamond pattern in the fat layer,

We would like to wish all our staff,
board of directors, suppliers, partners and everyone in Eeyou Istchee
the warmest greetings and best wishes for a Merry Christmas.
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drawing lines one way and then the opposite way, about ¾ inch apart.

Stud the centre of each diamond with a clove, then mix together the molasses, turbinado sugar, and Dijon mustard in a bowl and spread over the fat on the ham. It will dribble off a bit, so just spoon it back over the ham before putting back in the oven for 20 minutes, by which time the glaze will be burnished and blistered in the heat. Remove from the oven, and transfer to a board. Let it rest for 10-20 minutes before carving into thin slices.

Make-ahead Mashed Potatoes

No one doubts the glory of mashed potatoes, and while they are not difficult to make, they can be quite a faff in large quantities at the last minute. This is the answer: a tangy, subtly cheesy dish, with a crunchy topping, that has revolutionized my cooking life. I made them for the first time last year for Thanksgiving, and they have happily appeared on my table several times since. They come heartily recommended with the ham, and any time you want to spread the load when you have people coming over.

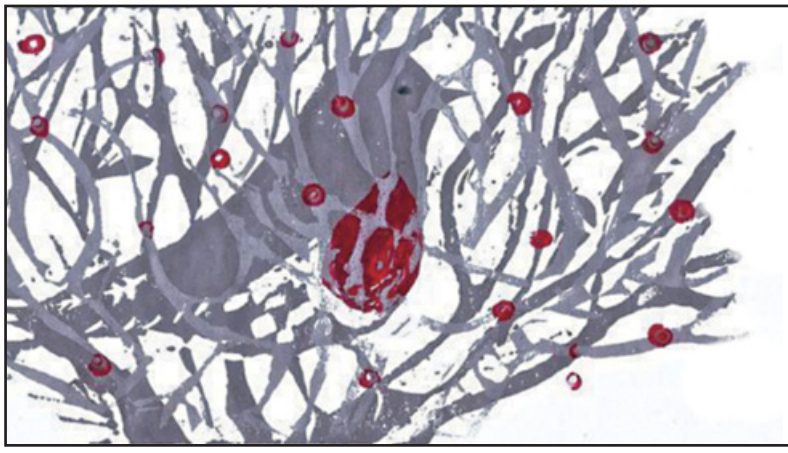
Serves 12

5½ pounds potatoes for mashing, such as Yukon Gold
Salt for potato water to taste
1¼ sticks (12 tablespoons) soft unsalted butter
1 cup sour cream
A good grinding of nutmeg, good grinding of pepper
1/3 cup shredded Parmesan
Sea salt flakes to taste or kosher salt
For the Topping:
¾ cup dried bread crumbs
5 tablespoons soft unsalted butter
½ cup shredded Parmesan

Peel the potatoes, then cut each one roughly into quarters, put into a large saucepan of salted water, and bring to a boil. Lower the heat slightly and cook until the potatoes are tender and soft but not disintegrating. The timing will depend on the size of your pan, but allow about 30 minutes once the water has come to a boil.

Before you drain the potatoes, reserve 2 cupfuls of the cooking water, then drain the potatoes and put them back in the hot, and now dry, pan with the lid on, but off the heat.

Melt the butter and sour cream in a saucepan, then pour this over the cooked and drained potatoes in their



Wishing you
a Wonder-Full Solstice,
Christmas &
New Year!

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Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association
Association des Femmes Cries de Eeyou Istchee

In this season of holiday cheer, the Cree Nation Government/Grand Council of the Crees sends its best and warmest greetings to Eeyou Istchee.

May this season bring health, happiness and unity to the people. May goodwill and gratitude fill our homes as we celebrate the holidays with our families and friends. Take the time to enjoy the presence of one another.

As the New Year approaches, we hope for peace and love to be our guides as we continue our journeys together.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Grand Chief Dr. Matthew Coon Come
Deputy Grand Chief Rodney Mark

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warm pot, and mash them while slowly adding some of the reserved potato cooking water to get the right softness and consistency. I keep this a fairly loose mixture, since it will thicken on standing and reheating. Add the nutmeg, pepper, Parmesan, and sea salt to taste.

Once you are happy with your mashed potatoes, spoon them into a wide, shallow ovenproof dish and smooth the top. You can let this cool and then refrigerate it, covered with plastic wrap, for up to 3 days, although if you want, you can, of course, proceed to the next stage immediately.

When you're ready to reheat, preheat the oven to 400°F and take the dish of potatoes out of the refrigerator to come to room temperature.

Tip the bread crumbs into a bowl, then add the butter, a teaspoonful at a time, and mix together to form a lumpy crumb topping. Dot over the top of the potatoes, and then sprinkle with the Parmesan. Bake for 30 minutes, or until piping hot all the way through.

Date and Marmalade Christmas Cake

This cake tastes like Christmas pudding – a very, very good Christmas pudding – the sort the Quakers (as I'm fond of quoting) once magnificently condemned as "the invention of the scarlet whore of Babylon." It's molasses-rich, damp, and so heady, it doesn't even need the traditional alcohol in it. It also happens to be gluten- and dairy-free, and is a last-minute cake, so very useful if you haven't got round to making that family recipe that needs to be baked ahead and fed with brandy for 6 months.

I like to use a wonderful home-made marmalade (thanks to Helio Fenerich), which is good and bitter and rather soft set, and it's a miracle I can keep it long enough to use in this cake. But there are many good marmalades out there. Just bear in mind that the dates have their own rich and fudgy sweetness (on top of all the other dried fruit) so don't go for anything too jam-like: Frank Cooper's Original Oxford Marmalade or Wilkin & Sons "Tawny" Orange would be my choice; in other words, go for a marmalade with depth, and one that provides that frisson of bitterness.

And while I adore the deep caramelly taste of medjool dates (the fruit of the biblical kings), you can use dried dates – the sort styled "ready to eat" – in their stead.

One final thing: the finely chopped almonds came, as did the almond meal, from a bag – any chopped nuts would do, but that nubbly texture, among all the plump-soaked fruit, is most desirable.

Cuts into approximately 14 slices

1 cup strong black tea
18 oz medjool dates
¾ cup natural color candied cherries 1 cup dried cranberries
1 cup golden raisins
¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon dark brown sugar
¾ cup plus 3 tablespoons coconut oil (15 tablespoons)
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
2 teaspoons ground ginger
½ teaspoon ground cloves
1 cup good-quality marmalade, plus more to brush on the cake
2 cups almond meal
¾ cup chopped almonds
3 extra large eggs, beaten
1-x-8-inch spring form cake pan

Preheat the oven to 300°F. Using your spring form cake pan as a template, cut out a parchment paper circle for the bottom, and then make a lining for the sides of the pan that is about 2¼ inches higher than the height of the pan itself. Do this by making a very long rectangular strip of parchment paper, then fold the long

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bottom edge in by about ¾ inch, as if turning up a hem, then take a pair of scissors and snip into this hem at intervals as if to make a rough frill. Curl this around the inside of the pan, with the frilly edge flat on the bottom, and then sit your parchment circle on top of the frilled bit to hold it in place.

Make your tea: I just pour 1 cup boiling water over a tea bag, let it steep, and make sure I take out the bag before adding the tea to the pan. Remove the pits from the dates, and snip each date into 4 pieces, using scissors. Halve the candied cherries, also using scissors. Of course, you can use a knife if you prefer.

Get out a saucepan that will take all the ingredients, including the tea, and put everything in it except for the almond meal, almonds, and eggs. Place on heat, stirring to mix, and stir every now and again until it comes to a boil. Then turn down the heat and let it simmer for 10 minutes, stirring frequently. The stirring not only helps the dates break up and "dissolve," but it also keeps the heat even and stops the mixture from burning on the bottom of the pan. After 10 minutes, take the pan off the heat and let the batter stand for 30 minutes; an hour wouldn't matter.

Stir in the almond meal and chopped almonds, followed by the beaten eggs, and when it's all combined – though frankly I could eat the batter just like this – pour it into the prepared pan and even out the top with a spatula, then bake for 1½-1¾ hours. The sides will be coming away from the pan, and the cake, while squidgy, should leave only a slight stickiness (rather than any actual batter) on a cake tester.

Remove to a wire rack, brush with about 3 tablespoons of marmalade, and let the cake cool in its pan (if your marmalade is firm, you may need to warm it a bit first to make it brushable – 20-30 seconds in the microwave, or warmed through in a small saucepan should do). Leave for a day before eating. I like to brush a little more bitter marmalade on top again, before slicing and serving. Obviously, you must feel free to decorate further and more seasonally if you wish.

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A lifesaving conversation

Annual Dialogue for Life conference promotes suicide prevention

Story and photos by Jesse Staniforth

"We were once a very strong, powerful and loving people," said Chisasibi healer Harry Snowboy. "We need to get that spirit back. I saw a glimpse of it in the old people I grew up around – how strong we are. It's not something that is lost. It's only something that needs to be reawakened. As long as we have our ancestors, nothing is lost."

Snowboy was speaking at the 13th annual Dialogue for Life conference on Indigenous suicide prevention, which ran November 21-23 in Montreal. Hosted by the First Nations and Inuit Suicide Prevention Association of Quebec and Labrador, it offered a space for frontline workers, families and individuals to receive both healing and training in dealing with losing loved ones to suicide, seeing others contemplate killing themselves, and having such feelings oneself.

Organizer Chad Diabo explained that the conference began simply as a place for frontline workers dealing with Native suicide.

"When you're talking about training frontline workers, one of the realities in Native communities is that our frontline workers are always on call. They may get paid for a 9-to-5 shift, but once they go home, people know where they live."

That means a frontline worker can't take a break from their duties, even out on their trap lines or fishing on the open water, because suicide remains a threat lurking in their communities.

"There's always people going into crisis," Diabo said. "The worker dealing with suicide is always on call, always bombarded, 24-7. Firefighters get a break. Police officers get a break. Frontline workers don't. It's their weekends, their evenings, their son's birthday party. When a crisis comes in, they've got to go deal with someone who wants to kill themselves."

Dialogue for Life began in Montreal as a way to bring those workers far away enough from their communities so that they couldn't be called away, but it has grown from offering training and healing to suicide-prevention workers to welcoming a variety of Elders, students and other individuals.

"Entire families come to the Dialogue for Life," said Diabo. "Kids are working on kids' issues, Elders are working on Elders' issues, multi-generational trauma, issues with stuff that happened in residential schools and Indian day schools. Everybody gets to work on their stuff, either collectively or by seeing people one-on-one."

The conference offers a variety of approaches, from western professional trainers to natural healers and traditional teachers from different First Nations. The atmosphere is warm and friendly – there are feasts and a powwow on opening night. Throughout the conference there is a feeling of open-hearted support.

"One of the realities is that suicide is taboo, but we need to start talking about it," Diabo explained. "If we don't talk about it, it remains the monster underneath the bed. What's good is when you take a flashlight and aim it underneath the bed, there's nothing there. That's not to say that suicide is nothing, but the monster gets really small when you flash the light on it. What we're doing is trying to work to make that monster even smaller."

Diabo says one of the great successes of the conference is that it brings together people from many perspectives, including different Indigenous Nations, to see how others are handling the issue of suicide. Mohawks can see how Inuit are dealing with it, and Cree and Innu can see what Mi'kmaqs are doing.

"We can learn from one another without recreating the wheel," Diabo said. "If it works to stop one person from taking their life, you're learning something."

Many people at the conference were talking about Snowboy. The phrase "He's really good" was widely repeated. He offered healing counselling sessions that were booked solid for the length of the conference.

"Healing work has been in my family for generations," he said, "on both sides of my mother's (Rupert) and father's families. I grew up in that. In the 1960s and early 1970s, we were still a very isolated people. I grew up on the land – I went to school, but I spent a lot of time with my grandparents, my mother's mother. She knew a lot about the plants and spirituality."

Snowboy says his counselling involves a combination of culture and spirituality. He notes that in the past, Indigenous people across many nations found identity in rites of passage as adolescents, which taught them to understand themselves.

"How can you love yourself when you don't know your identity?" he asked. "You have to learn who you are in order to know what you're going to love."

While Snowboy believes that land-based healing is valuable, he noted that even for those Nations that don't have access to much land, the healing that comes from ancestry lives on.

"A lot of it has to do with spirituality. I believe as people, who we are is 80% spiritual. That 20% is traditional skills. So if you can find that 80%, you'll be able to feel that anywhere. That's what I tell them. I can't come in between them and God. They have to find that within themselves. They can go anywhere and still feel that part of what they have left."

Happy Holidays and
peace on earth for the coming year!
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Letter of Concern

This is a statement that was presented to the Council of Chisasibi, the chosen vehicle for the voice of the people in the community of Chisasibi.

For many years, the people…the Spirit of the People…have continuously stated their concerns through the local general assemblies for the overwhelming Cree Health and Social conditions in our lives that have devastated and wounded the Life of the Cree People.

This statement questions, more specifically, the management practices and decision processes of our present health entity – "Our Cree Health Board". These practices and processes are the guiding principles in the implementation of quality health and social services.

Our People need our full and profound support to take ownership, to take back their health, their medicine and their Cree way of Life.

There are many health and social questions that need to be answered by the Cree Health Board for the people of Chisasibi, the ones presented in this letter are only a few, a tip of the iceberg, that can reopen the door towards the truth of the present status of our "Cree Heath Board's" reality.

A. Executive Level

• What is happening with the Nishiiyuu Department? The work of Nishiiyuu is the first key stage into the health and healing of our Cree Nation.

• Why did we put a non-Native as interim Executive Director of CHB? Where were our Cree people?

• Along with non-Native people, why are consultants or people with no experience in the culture of the Cree, being placed into directorship or management positions?

• Without this first-hand experience and understanding of the Cree people's world, these appointments will always misguide or not understand the full needs of the Cree people?

• How is accountability been practiced for the non-implementation and non-integration of traditional methods in all programming within the Cree world for the implementation of Cree Policy?

B. Patient Services

• Why are our Cree people expressing inadequate services for Montreal and Val-d'Or within Cree Patient Services? Food services within Expresso and foster homes? Lodging in Expresso and foster homes in Montreal and Val-d'Or? Travel? Escorts?

C. Youth Protection Services

• Why are the youth intervention services a growing concern as a questionable process, within the Cree Health Board, by the Commission? Youth foster care? Youth helping plans where are they?

D. Social Services and Homecare

• Where are the family interventions to help the Cree people?

• Why are CHB employees expressing stressed work conditions?

• Where is the capacity building for this sector?

• Community members are losing connection with Social Services and homecare services are always questioned.

E. Special Needs

• Where is the Special Needs Services? People are not given enough answers and reports are given only to the CHB Board of Directors, but not to the Cree people.

F. Where is Mental Health, which should be the umbrella for all this healing, coming from and when will it become a priority?

These questions and answers needed are not to disrespect anyone, but to begin a renewed and transparent working relationship and also to have a better understanding of our roles. We must begin to walk together in truth, walk together as equals, walk together in the ways of our people and continue to use the truth of our Elders and ancestors.

We are all taught by our Elders, our wisdom keepers and through our true inherent way of Life. Together, as we begin to find, understand and resolve injustices, we are reminded to use the gift of truth. We are to be respectful to one another and establish constructive working relations.

We must begin to plant a healthy seed toward a process of change. This process must include respect, understanding and encourage empowerment. It is through awareness and constructive resolution that will liberate us toward true freedom.

Our ancestors and Elders are our wisdom keepers and they continue to remind us what we do today creates our people's future. We must begin to put in place a healthy foundation for the next seven generations.

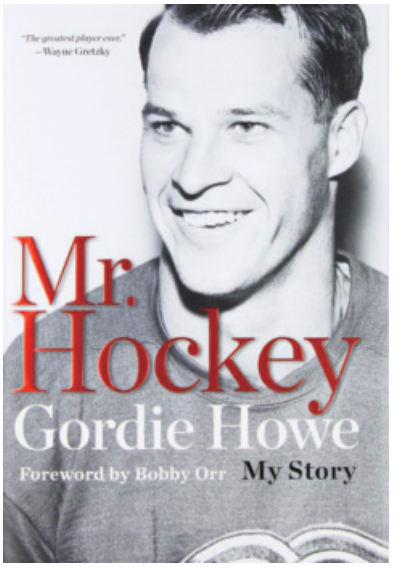
Let's develop a social assessment and review and evaluate the situation in the Cree Health Board, because this has been unresolved for far too long.

Let's create a new road for the development of this dream of a healthy foundation that we need so much RIGHT NOW and let's not leave this for our children to fix.

Eric R. House
Concerned Member of the Cree Nation of Chisasibi

Mr. Hockey: My Story

Book Review by Joshua Grant



Considered by no less than Bobby Orr and Wayne Gretzky as the greatest player to play professional hockey, Gordie Howe now offers his own take on his career, early life and the upbringing that produced the athlete known as "Mr. Hockey."

Born in Floral, Saskatchewan, Howe grew up in Saskatoon with his mother Katherine, father Albert and eight brothers and sisters. Being part of a large family during the Great Depression meant that Howe and his siblings were no strangers to hard work and hard times.

His first pair of skates came from a neighbour who exchanged a few humble belongings for a couple of dollars to feed her family while her husband was sick. Howe wore layers of wool socks to make the men's size 6 skates fit, learning to use them on frozen ponds, the South Saskatchewan River and the icy streets of Saskatoon. He got his first taste of organized hockey at 11 after a friend's unfortunate fall through the ice gave Howe the chance to borrow his equipment and attend a peewee team tryout.

The determination, perseverance and physical strength developed in difficult times gave Howe the skill set he needed to play hockey at a professional level. His reputation as a hard-nosed player preceded him and he never hesitated to lash out with his stick or give someone a quick shove into the boards to gain some extra space on the ice. Hockey fans are familiar with the "Gordie Howe hat trick," earned by tallying a goal, an assist and a fighting major in one game's work.

However, Howe's family say that off the ice he was an entirely different person: loving, humble, friendly and quick to lend a hand. He relished hard work and did whatever he could to help out his family. As a kid he caught fish and sold animal pelts for a few cents and in the off-season he lugged bags of cement for his dad.

Howe was 14 when he joined the Saskatchewan Senior League and it wasn't long before NHL scouts recognized his combination of natural talent, grit and durability. He broke into the NHL at the age of 18 and never looked back; he was able to play all the way to the age of 50. The only player to compete in five different decades, Howe came out of NHL retirement to play in the World Hockey Association (WHA) with his sons Mark and Marty in 1973 and ultimately retired in 1980.

All told, Gordie Howe amassed 801 goals and 1049 assists in the NHL, plus an additional 174 goals and 334 assists in the WHA. *Mr. Hockey: My Story* gives the reader a chance to follow Howe from his humble beginnings on the Prairies to the forefront of the NHL and learn about his character and the lasting impact he had on the game.

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Driving the deadly winter roads

by Xavier Kataquapit

It is again the time we have to deal with snow, icy roads, freezing rain and sometimes blizzards. I love the north and enjoy all that winter offers but I also realize just how deadly the roads and highways can be this time of the year.

More and more people I know from up the James Bay coast are coming south and renting vehicles or purchasing them to drive during their vacation time. I don't think people realize how dangerous travelling on the roads can be during the winter.

So many people take for granted that they can simply jump into their car or truck and head out on the roads and highways in the north this time of the year. Seasoned and experienced drivers know better. I have known too many people who have lost their lives on our northern roads and highways and they were all good drivers. The only mistake they made was to head out onto an icy, snow-covered road in poor conditions and at the wrong place and with bad timing lost control of their vehicle.

To make matters worse, main highways in the north are constantly full of transport trucks. These trucks rarely stop or pull off the road in bad conditions as they have deadlines to meet for delivery of their goods. Many of the drivers are often tired from logging long hours on the road.

I have counted hundreds of transport trucks on my way south in the winter. Even in blizzard conditions when nobody, including myself, should have been on the road, I met convoys of transport trucks and the whiteouts they caused made for blind driving conditions. Most of the time I don't travel in bad winter weather anymore and if I am on the road and things get just too risky then I stop and stay in a hotel or motel overnight.

Travel on northern roads in the winter is much like Russian roulette in that the vehicle you are meeting on the icy road in blizzard conditions might not spin out and hit you or vice versa, but really it is just a matter of luck. It does not matter how good a driver you are and how tough or manly you think you are, driving on bad winter roads is just not a very intelligent thing to do. A person's life is much more valuable than the need to be anywhere that demands travel on a terrible winter night in conditions that stack the odds of having an accident against you.

How do any of us rationalize driving on a hockey rink in whiteout blizzard conditions while meeting a steady flow of huge transport trucks barely hanging on to the road. It really is kind of crazy when you think of it. Yet, we tend to take life for granted and head out onto these dangerous roads that often end in tragic results.

Is it really worth it to head out to some hockey or other sports tournament with a bunch of kids in your vehicle on icy and dangerous roads just to play a game? Is a business meeting or the attendance at some event so important that it should put your life and those of your family in danger as you slip and slide your way along an icy road while meeting large transport trucks that you pass by with only a metre to spare? We spend so much time and effort building our lives, carrying on with careers, developing families and yet we will put all that at risk on deadly winter roads at the worst of times.

Would you ever think of playing Russian roulette with your loved ones, family and friends with a loaded gun? Of course not! Then why on earth do people insist on packing everyone into a vehicle and heading out onto icy and snow-covered roads and highways in terrible winter weather? If you really insist on doing that... good luck.

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HARDY RINGUETTE

Wishing everyone in Eeyou Istchee a Merry Christmas & Happy Season's Greetings

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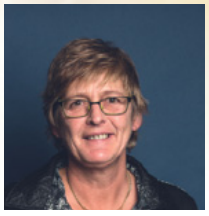
Audrey Ringuette

Luc Desjardins



Lucie Beaudoin

Mario Frénette

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de choisir Air Creebec.
À vous et à votre famille,
MEILLEURS VOEUX
pour Noël et
la Nouvelle Année!

THANK YOU
for flying Air Creebec
BEST WISHES
to you and your family
this Christmas and
in the New Year

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